



# Kings of Israel and Judah

## Key Theme

- God alone is to be worshipped.

## Key Passages

- 2 Chronicles 10:13–19; **Israel:** 1 Kings 14:7–18, 16:25–28, 16:29–33; 2 Kings 10:30–31, 17:1–2; **Judah:** 2 Chronicles 12:1, 12:12–16; 1 Kings 15:8–15, 22:41–44; 2 Kings 18:1–10, 24:17–20

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the pattern of the kings of Israel.
- Describe the pattern of the kings of Judah.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

page 4

Write on the board, “Will there ever be a worthy king?”

Students will work on the Memory Verse Review Sheet.

- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Scripture Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM



### Studying God’s Word

page 4

The nation of Israel was judged by God because of Solomon’s sin of idolatry. After his death, God used Solomon’s son Rehoboam and his foolish actions to judge Israel. Israel was split in two. The wicked line of kings led the people in Israel and Judah away from the Lord. God judged them again using the Assyrians and the Babylonians who overthrew the nations and scattered the people.

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Read through the lesson key passages.
- Print one Kings Pronunciation Guide from the Resource DVD-ROM.



### Activity: A Worthy King

page 7

The students will be doing a personal reflection exercise to examine the authorities in their lives that are leading them to holiness or sin.

- Student Guides
- Pencils



# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

What a mess! As we look at the history of the kings of Israel and Judah after the death of Solomon, we can't describe it any other way. Israel had existed as a united kingdom for about 120 years during the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, but the kingdom was torn in two and never restored. To truly study all of the details of the two kingdoms would take a very long time, so the goal of this lesson is to give a quick overview of the two kingdoms. We will take a specific look at the kings and prophets in the North and how that kingdom finally was taken captive to Assyria (2 Kings 17:5–6) in 721 BC. Then we will look to the Southern Kingdom—briefly reviewing the history that ended with its final destruction by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25:1) in 588 BC. As you read and study the Scripture passages, you will notice the kings of Judah and Israel are described as either doing good or evil in the sight of the Lord.

In Scripture, the Northern Kingdom is referred to as Israel or Ephraim. The Southern Kingdom is called Judah most of the time, with a few exceptions. The capital of the Northern Kingdom was originally in Shechem and later moved to Tirzah and then finally to Samaria. Throughout the books of First and Second Kings and Second Chronicles, we find accounts of the persistent wickedness of the 19 different kings who ruled in Israel—the worst being King Ahab and his queen Jezebel (1 Kings 16:33). The wickedness started with King Jeroboam I in 975 BC, and God revealed that these kings of the North (Israel) failed to worship Him and led the people astray with the worship of false gods (1 Kings 14:7–10). Altars and high places were constructed to worship false gods along with idolatrous Ashtoreth poles and temples for Baal worship. It was a dark time for Israel as there were no kings that sought

to honor the God who had given them the Promised Land as an inheritance.

Throughout over 200 years of these evil kings reigning in Israel, God sent His prophets—like Amos, Hosea, and Elijah—to call the people and the rulers to repentance. However, the kings and their people refused to return to God, seeking their own power and pleasure rather than God's glory. And so, finally, God acted in judgment by bringing the Assyrian army against them. In 721 BC, the capital of Israel, Samaria, fell and the people were taken captive (2 Kings 17:5–6). The Northern Kingdom was no more.

The kings of the Southern Kingdom, Judah, followed a different pattern. Rehoboam followed his father, Solomon, on the throne, and the line of David continued to rule in Jerusalem in fulfillment of God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:13–16). Rehoboam angered the people and was cruel to them as he sought to establish his name rather than God's (1 Kings 12:10–11). His son Abijam (also called Abijah) continued in this tradition of cruelty and idolatry (1 Kings 15:3). Then came Asa, Abijam's son. He cleansed Judah of the idols and the perverted persons (1 Kings 15:11–14). Next was Jehoshaphat, who walked in the ways of his father, Asa (1 Kings 22:43). Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, then began to reign in Judah. He did not walk in the way of his father Jehoshaphat, but followed the ways of the wicked kings of Israel and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. This began a cycle of good kings/bad kings in Judah, continuing through all 20 kings of the Southern Kingdom.

As with Israel, God sent various prophets to Judah to proclaim His judgments and call the people to repentance. Judah was much more responsive to God's call, but most of God's warnings and calls to repentance were not heeded. Through all of the messages of coming judgment and calls for repentance, God knew that He would ultimately have to execute judgment against His children. Just as the Northern Kingdom, Israel, had fallen to the Assyrians in 721 BC, Jerusalem

was to fall at the hands of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:1). This would be the end of Judah as an established nation and the beginning of a period of control by the empires that would rule the Middle East over the next centuries.

As we look back over this history, we should be gripped by the patience of God to continuously send His messengers to call for repentance—over hundreds of years. We should also look soberly at the judgment that God sent against Israel and Judah and know that we face God’s chastening if we sin and rebel against Him. As Christians, we need to be listening to the message God has given to us through His completed Word.

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Sadly, looking at the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of the children of Israel, you won’t find them to be much different than the kingdoms that were around them. The two kingdoms warred against one another throughout their history. Not unlike the professing church in America today, there was much corruption and hypocrisy in Israel and Judah. You might think humanity would learn from these lessons of history, but it seems that we keep repeating the same mistakes over and over.

Outside of Israel and Judah, the Greek culture was developing, and the first Olympiad was held in 776 BC. Homer and Aesop were writing the classics of Greek literature, and, on the other side of the globe, the Mayan culture was blooming in Central America. In general, this period of history could be described as one of constant upheaval, accompanied by the rise and fall of major empires.

Despite all of the uncertainty and turmoil in the world, God was still reigning over everything, just as He is today. This is an important fact that we must keep in the forefront of our minds. God is still just as much

in control of the world today as He was then. This is a truth that can help us understand how to live in the world today. It doesn’t matter who is president or what country is invading which—we must fix our hope on God and what He has done for us on the Cross. Just as Paul exhorted the Christians in Colossae, we must set our minds on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, and not on the things on the earth (Colossians 3:1–4).

Confidence that God is sitting on His throne with Jesus at His right hand offers us great comfort and hope. We can rejoice in His goodness, knowing that He is patient to call sinners to repentance as they look to Christ for forgiveness.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Sovereign Lord, I am at once amazed at your patience and humbled by your justice when I study the way you dealt with Israel and Judah. My heart breaks as I consider the idolatry that Israel practiced after all you brought them through. Lord, the sin and idolatry in my culture are so similar to Israel’s. Sometimes I feel like the darkness of this world will swallow me up. Help me to be like Hezekiah—to hold fast to you. Thank you for the opportunity to teach this lesson to my class. May it bring light into the dark places in the lives of my students and their families. May our biographies say that we trusted in Jesus Christ, whose blood made us righteous, so that we were able to do what was right in the sight of the Lord even when life was hard and temptations came our way.

➤ **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





## COME ON IN

- Write on the board, “Will there ever be a worthy king?”
- Pass out the Scripture strips as students come in. Ask them to use the strips as bookmarks to mark the text in their Bible and be prepared to read them.



## Review

As we begin this new quarter of material, we are going to be focusing on the period of the divided kingdoms in Israel and Judah. We have been talking about the two kingdoms for a while, and the ministries of Jonah, Elijah, and Elisha happened during the era of the divided kingdom.

- ? Does anyone remember how the division of the kingdom came about? *After Solomon's death, God split the kingdom giving ten tribes to Jeroboam and leaving Judah to be ruled by Rehoboam in the line of David.*

*Read 2 Chronicles 10:13–19 aloud as a recap.*

- ? The rest of the lessons for this Quarter will have us looking at the northern kingdom of Israel for a few lessons and then the southern kingdom of Judah for a few lessons. Sadly, we are heading to some very dark passages and the destruction of both of the kingdoms before God brings about a partial restoration.



➤ Write on the board, “Will there ever be a worthy king?”

➤ Use the Kings Pronunciation Guide to assist you in pronouncing the names correctly.



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

We are going to start our review of Scripture by looking at a bunch of passages about Israel. Those of you who received those passages about Israel, be ready to read your passage when I call it. *Have the passages below read aloud. Pause after each text to answer the questions.*

### EXAMINE THE WORD

#### Observe the Text

- ? Was Jeroboam a good or bad king? Why? *Bad, he promoted idolatry.*
- ? What does God promise to do in verse 15? *Israel would be uprooted and scattered past (the Euphrates) River because of their idolatry.*
- ? How did Omri compare to Jeroboam? *He was more wicked than Jeroboam.*
- ? Was Ahab a good or bad king? Why? *He did more evil than those before him. Overall, Ahab was likely the most wicked of all the kings of Israel. His wife Jezebel was part of the disaster that came to Israel.*

1 Kings 14:7–18

1 Kings 16:25–28

1 Kings 16:29–33

? Did Jehu follow God? *No, he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam.*

? Hoshea was the last king of Israel. Was he a good or bad king? *He was evil, but not as bad as those before him.*

2 Kings 10:30–31

2 Kings 17:1–2

## Discover the Truth

We have only mentioned a few of the 19 kings who reigned in Israel, but if we looked at the rest, we would see the same pattern.

? How can we describe the pattern of the kings of Israel? *They were all evil and all failed to worship God. They “did evil in the sight of the Lord” or continued in the “sins of Jeroboam.”*

Throughout these passages, we heard that the kings were constantly compared to Jeroboam. Jeroboam introduced idol worship into the Northern Kingdom by fashioning two calves to be worshipped. So, the sin of Jeroboam was primarily idolatry and leading the people astray. That is why the rest of the kings are compared to him.

If you look at this timeline, you can see the list of the kings of Israel on this line. Below it is the list of the kings of Judah. Some only reigned for a few months, while others ruled for decades. There were even periods of overlapping reigns and times when there was no king on the throne in Israel. But they were all wicked and led the people astray.

This point here, at 721 BC, is where God fulfilled His promise to Jeroboam to uproot Israel and scatter it beyond the Euphrates River. We will talk about the Assyrian captivity in more detail in a few weeks.

? What attribute of God could we contrast with the character of the kings of Israel? *God is holy and the kings were all wicked.*

God alone is to be worshipped! The kings of Israel led the people astray to worship calves, Baal, Asherah, and other false gods. They rejected the holiness of the true God and committed adultery with the false gods. The kings of Israel rejected God’s holiness and followed a pattern of wickedness.



➤ Refer to the History of Israel poster.

HOLY

## READ THE WORD

Let’s shift our focus to the southern kingdom of Judah. Those of you who have the passages marked Judah, be ready to read them when I call the text. *Have the passages below read aloud. Pause after each text to answer the questions.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

Rehoboam was the son of Solomon to whom God granted the rule of Judah to continue the promise made to David—that a descendant of David would always sit on the throne.

➤ Many of the kings’ names have variant spellings—Abijah and Abijam are both names for the same son of Rehoboam.

2 Chronicles 12:1,  
12:12-14

1 Kings 15:8-15

1 Kings 22:41-44

2 Kings 18:1-10

➤ Hezekiah was the most righteous king of Judah.

2 Kings 24:17-20

➤ Refer to the History of Israel poster.

? **How did Rehoboam perform as a king?** *He forsook the law of the Lord, and the people did likewise.*

? **What is significant about Jerusalem?** *God had chosen to honor His name there. This is where the Temple remained even during the divided period.*

? **What was the relationship between Israel and Judah?** *They were constantly at war.*

? **Was Asa a good or bad king? Why?** *He was a good king; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and his heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.*

? **Who is Asa compared to?** *He is compared to his "father" David. David would have been his great, great grandfather.*

? **What actions did Asa take as king?** *He burned an Asherah pole but did not tear down the high places where sacrifices were offered to false gods.*

? **What parallel event is given in this passage?** *We learn that Jehoshaphat ruled in Judah at the same time Ahab was ruling in Israel. These dates help us organize the kings and their reigns, especially when kings in the north and south have the same names.*

? **How did Jehoshaphat rule Judah?** *He followed his father Asa and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord.*

? **How did Hezekiah act as king of Judah?** *He did right in the sight of the Lord as David had done.*

? **What actions did Hezekiah take toward idolatry?** *He tore down the places of idol worship and burned and smashed the idols.*

? **How did Hezekiah compare to the other kings of Judah?** *There was none as good as him among the kings of Judah. He brought a significant restoration to Judah at the time when Israel to the north was being taken captive by the Assyrians.*

? **How did Zedekiah do as king of Judah?** *He did evil in the sight of the Lord.*

This was the final king of Judah as Babylon took over Judah in 607 BC when Zedekiah rebelled.

### Discover the Truth

? **We have only looked at a few of the kings of Judah, but how does their behavior compare to the kings of Israel?** *There was a pattern of good/bad kings with several periods of revival.*

? **What phrase is used to describe the bad kings?** *They did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.*

? **What phrase is used to describe the good kings?** *They did what was right in the sight of the Lord, or they followed David.*

As you can see on this timeline, Judah lasted longer than Israel, but there were still only 20 kings in the south, several of them ruling for more than 30 years. All of these kings were from the line of David, though not all followed God as David had done. God kept this line intact as He had

promised to leave a descendant of David on the throne until the coming of the Eternal King—Jesus. However, the constant rebellion and idolatry brought destruction to Judah. God used the Babylonians to destroy Judah, take the people captive, and burn Jerusalem and the Temple built by Solomon.

God had sent many prophets to both the northern and southern kingdoms to call them to repentance. He reserved the punishment they deserved for their wickedness.

? What attribute was God displaying in withholding punishment for so many centuries? *He was showing His mercy by sending warnings and holding back the punishment they deserved.*



MERCIFUL



## A Worthy King

### MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

*The students will be doing a personal reflection exercise to examine the authorities in their lives that are leading them to holiness or sin.*

God had called His children, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, to be distinct from the nations around them. This was set out clearly in the laws delivered to the Israelites. They were called to be distinct from the nations around them.

The Israelites had already asked for a king so that they could be like the other nations. God warned them about the things the kings would do—how they would oppress the people and lead them astray.

If we will stop and think a bit, there are many authorities in our lives. We are under the authority of governments, parents, elders, teachers, etc. We also allow ourselves

to come under the authority of certain people and ideals. With the path of all of these kings, good and bad, fresh in our minds, I would like you to stop and think about how you allow these authorities to influence you. The Israelites followed their leaders to both prosperity and doom. Read over the questions in the A Worthy King activity in your Student Guide. I will give you a few minutes to work on that and then we will wrap up our lesson for the day.

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

In Jeremiah 17:9, we read that the hearts of men are wicked and deceitful. To avoid deceiving ourselves, it is good to stop and think about what things are influencing our actions so that we can identify any sinful patterns in our lives and fight to put those sins to death. I hope you will find time this week to prayerfully consider any other areas of influence in your life that are leading you into sinful actions or thinking. Our worship should be offered to God alone.





# Applying God's Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

As we think about the patterns of failure in the kings of Israel and Judah, their failures came down to a matter of worship. They chose to worship false gods rather than the true God. With their influence, they led many people astray and brought destruction to the kingdoms they ruled over. All of these kings were part of the fallen race of Adam and prone to follow their sinful hearts rather than looking to God and trusting in and worshipping Him alone.

Christ is the only king who is worthy of our full allegiance. Those in our lives who have authority or influence over us are part of sinful humanity, and we should only follow them as they seek to follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). We owe our full allegiance and worship to God through Jesus by the power of the Spirit. We must guard our hearts and minds from being influenced to seek the things of the world rather than the things which are above. We must test every message we receive against the truth of God's Word—the absolute authority in our lives.

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? When you read these passages about kings who worshipped false gods and idols, do you tend to think of yourself as capable of committing that type of sin or as being better than those silly idolaters? *Most people probably tend to think that they would never do such wicked things, but they need to be careful that they think they stand lest they fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). Apart from a pure devotion to Christ, our hearts can lead us astray into worshipping idols like money, fame, cars, sports, etc. We must be fully devoted to worshipping God alone and to rooting out any form of idolatry in our hearts.*



- ? In the passages we read, there were many legacies described as one person was said to have walked in the ways of someone before him, whether good or bad. What are the major ways that you are seeking to leave a godly legacy to those who will follow you as you follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)? *Discuss various answers focusing on discipling others with God's Word as the authority, consistently seeking to apply the truths of Scripture in our own lives, exhorting others to trust in Christ for salvation, being diligent in our own study and Christian disciplines, etc.*
- ? If you have identified some sinful tendencies after our activity, what things can the people in this room do to come alongside you to bear that burden and bring restoration through forgiveness in Christ (Galatians 6:1–5)? *We are called to love one another in the community of the body of Christ. Confessing our sins to one another, requesting prayer and accountability, and seeking help to overcome sin are an important, but often neglected, part of the life of the Church. Exhort people to seek godly counsel for help in these areas.*
- ? In light of what we have studied today, why is it so important to keep our eyes fixed on Christ as our true King? *Discuss various ideas, remembering that all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ (Colossians 2:3).*



### MEMORY VERSE

**Isaiah 42:8** I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to carved images.



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for giving us a faithful Savior, King Jesus, to follow.
- Praise God for His mercy and grace demonstrated at the Cross.
- Ask God for the empowering work of the Holy Spirit to bring sin to light and to remove it from our lives.

